

North Cumberland Fire District

Meeting Minutes

November 16, 2005

Opening:

The regular meeting of the North Cumberland Fire District (NCFD) was called to order at

7:09 p.m. on Wednesday, November 16, 2005, by Chairman Edward LeBlanc.

Present:

Edward LeBlanc, Chairman

Paul Lindquist

Martin Klara

Matthew Gannon

John Aharonian

Robert Audette

Brian Campbell

Others Present: Absent:

Daniel Hamel, Treasurer Fay Dakake, Clerk

Rene Gendreau, Chief

Martin Klara, Interim Tax Collector

A. Approval of Minutes

The clerk's report for the October 19, 2005 meeting was approved by unanimous consent.

B. Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer's report was approved by unanimous consent. The Treasurer noted that the tax collector's report was in error by \$2,879.10 due to a mistake in not carrying forward that amount from a previous report. This error was noted and the Treasurer committed to work with the interim tax collector to resolve this accounting error.

- o Financial Summary, September, 2005
- o Tax Collections, September 30, 2005
- o Profit and Loss Statement, September, 2005
- o Profit & Loss July – September, 2005
- o Balance sheet as of September 30, 2005

C. Tax Collector's Report

The tax collector's report (the last report by the outgoing tax collector, Ms. Dupont) was approved by unanimous consent, with the provision that the error noted above would be resolved.

D. Chief's Report and Monthly Expenditures

The Chief's report was approved by unanimous consent.

E. Committee Reports

Committee reports were provided to the Board. Of note is the Nominations Committee received an application for a Trustee position from Mr. Bill DeVock. The prospective nomination of Mr. Bill DeVock will be discussed at the December meeting,

F. Old Business

a. Chairman LeBlanc will contact the Cumberland Tax Assessor for a list of town tax exemptions granted to residents of the District. This is in connection with efforts by some residents of the District to receive similar tax exemptions (for age, veteran's status, etc.) on their fire district tax bills.

b. The Chief reported that the Newell Bridge replacement project has been indefinitely postponed by the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (DOT) following a public meeting held at the Community School in North Cumberland. The Chief and Capt Delisle attended this meeting, where citizens and the Mayor, as well as the Chief, voiced their concerns about the state's plan to close the bridge for a year or more to install a new, replacement bridge. Based on input received at the meeting, the State DOT decided to postpone the project and simply monitor the bridge for structural integrity. It was

noted that the bridge is currently safe and was only scheduled for replacement due to its age, not due to any structural failure or similar cause.

c. Mr. Audette, Mr. Gannon, and Mr. Campbell were identified as Trustee representatives to the Labor/Management Committee.

d. The Board was provided a brief update on the Cumberland Fire District Merger Committee by Chairman LeBlanc. The Merger Committee continues to make progress in collecting information to determine what process would need to be followed should a merger become reality. It was noted that the issue of job security for currently-employed District firefighters was paramount and, should that issue not be resolved first, there was little need to proceed further in examining a potential merger.

G. New Business

a. The interim tax collector noted that the computer currently hosting the tax collection software is old and inadequate, and does not have the capability to “back up” system information. The Board voted unanimously to approve up to \$1200 for a purchase of a new computer for the tax collector’s office.

b. The interim tax collector also requested guidance from the Board regarding his authority to issue and approve tax abatements, waive interest penalties, etc. Currently no guidance exists. The Board agreed to provide such guidance to the tax collector.

c. Mr. Aharonian explained to the Board how it came to be that Mr. Klara is the interim tax collector. The women originally offered the position in mid-October deferred a decision pending the outcome of another job she was seeking. Because the District's tax collector was moving out of state and could not extend her time in the position, Mr. Klara (also an applicant for the job) was asked to assume duties as interim tax collector and graciously agreed to do so. There was a brief discussion by Board members on the process to be followed to hire a new permanent tax collector, and it was unanimously agreed to include the nomination of Mr. Klara as permanent tax collector at the December meeting.

d. The Chief reported that processing of the Board's resolution adopting the National Incident Management System (NIMS) as the standard command and control system for the District is pending the Clerk's signature.

e. The Chief noted that the annual "Lighting of the Green" at the District's station to open the holiday season was scheduled for 6 p.m. on December 11th.

f. The Chief discussed the need to hire an additional firefighter. To meet new state fire codes and the corresponding increased demand for fire safety inspections, an additional firefighter, with specialized training to conduct inspections, is required. The Chief stated his

intention to employ the new firefighter in a day-working capacity, not on the typical firefighter shift, to ensure inspections were completed. This would also permit the Chief to return his focus to administration and leadership of the Fire District. The eligibility list from the April 2005 firefighter examinations was still effective, and the candidate currently at the top of that list had already been interviewed by a special hiring committee of the District and was highly recommended. By unanimous consent the Board voted to authorize the hiring of this candidate, with the provision that if that candidate did not or could not accept the position, the Chief would begin a new hiring process in search for an acceptable candidate.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:31 p.m.

Minutes submitted by: Edward LeBlanc _____
Chairman